



Visitors to James K. Polk's Ancestral Home First in Nation to Get Latest Presidential \$1 Coin

August 20, 2009

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Visitors to former James K. Polk's ancestral home today were the first in the Nation to get Presidential \$1 Coins bearing his portrait. The coins were made available following the United States Mint's ceremony to officially present the coin to the Nation. To commemorate the event, each child 18 years old and younger received a newly minted James K. Polk Presidential \$1 Coin. Adults at the ceremony exchanged their currency for rolls of the new coin.

"The James K. Polk Presidential \$1 Coin is the 11th in the United States Mint's Presidential \$1 Coin Program," United States Mint Deputy Director Andy Brunhart told the crowd. "It is my great privilege to present the coin to the Nation."

John Seigenthaler, renowned author and journalist, and John Holtzapple, director of the James K. Polk House, joined Brunhart to celebrate the coin's release.

The obverse (heads side) of the coin features a dramatic portrait of the President that was designed by United States Mint Artistic Infusion Program Master Designer Susan Gamble and executed by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Charles Vickers. Inscriptions on the coin's obverse include JAMES K. POLK, IN GOD WE TRUST, 11th PRESIDENT and 1845 –1849.

The coin's reverse (tails), by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Don Everhart, features a striking image of the Statue of Liberty. Incused on the coin's edge are the inscriptions 2009, E PLURIBUS UNUM and the mint mark of origin (P for Philadelphia or D for Denver).

James K. Polk was born in 1795 in North Carolina. He was a lawyer by trade and served six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, including four years as Speaker of the House. Following his tenure in the House, he served as governor of Tennessee. Despite his years of national service, however, Polk was relatively unknown when nominated by the Democratic Party to run for President. He was the first "dark-horse" candidate to be nominated by a major political party.

President Polk was a strong advocate of Manifest Destiny, the belief that the United States had the right to expand across the entire continent. During his administration, the country grew by more than one million square miles to include present-day Oregon, Washington, California and New Mexico. A Texas border on the Rio Grande also was established during his administration. As promised during his presidential campaign, Polk left office after serving only one term. He died in Nashville in 1849, just three and a half months after leaving office.

The Presidential \$1 Coin Act of 2005 requires the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue Presidential \$1 Coins to honor the U.S. Presidents in the order in which they served. Four new designs are released annually.

Created by Congress in 1792, the United States Mint is the Nation's sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage. Its primary mission is to produce an adequate volume of circulating coinage for the Nation to conduct its trade and commerce. The United States Mint also produces proof, uncirculated and commemorative coins; Congressional Gold Medals; and silver, gold and platinum bullion coins.

To view and download high-resolution images of the circulating James K. Polk Presidential \$1 Coin, go to <http://www.usmint.gov/pressroom/index.cfm?action=photo#Pres>. Background information on the Presidential \$1 Coin Program is available at http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/coin/index.cfm. Lesson plans are available for download at <http://www.usmint.gov/kids/>

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